

5 steps

Exploring Inner Space

to unearth your true passion in life



Many people who step back to assess their lives discover they've spent years traveling on autopilot. What's more, when they look more closely inward they may find the reasoning behind their goals and motivation is flawed - just like HAL, the rogue spaceship computer in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Primed for adventure? Try these step-by-step tips for disconnecting autopilot ("Just what do you think you're doing, Dave?") and exploring your true life's purpose.

1

Do a complete systems check. Are you regularly doing what you're good at and what you truly love to do? If not, now could be an ideal time to set new goals that are both realistic and joyful.

Maybe you don't need a complete career change. How about just taking some time on weekends or before and after work to do the things that really feed your soul? The options are endless: playing guitar, painting watercolors, joining a community softball team, taking a class in website design, building furniture, reading a good mystery, sewing, gardening, volunteering with a community youth group.

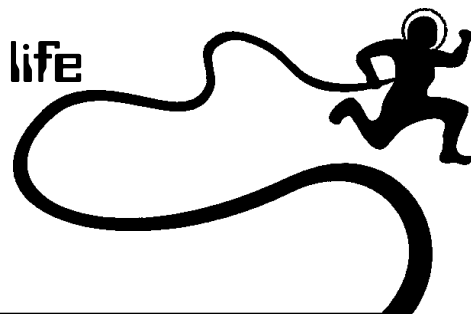
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Find your passion. It's deep within you, not outside in what others are doing or saying. Discovering your true purpose involves learning to reconnect with your authentic self, which may be buried under many layers of habits and expectations that have accumulated over years. Some tips:

- Take a cue from your childhood. What did you love doing? What were the moments when you felt most joyful, stimulated, motivated? Look at old photos; you may see something there that you'd totally forgotten. Or ask relatives what they observed in you as a child.
- Examine your belief systems. Are you doing certain things only because your spouse wants you to, or because they adhere to your parents' values? Without neglecting your responsibilities to yourself and others, think about how you can replace outdated or misplaced values with ones that make real sense to you now.
- Look at the things that are fun for you now. How can you inject more of that quality into your life?
- Notice the activities you do that make you feel physically relaxed and open, versus the ones that produce tension or discomfort.
- Explore how you function best. Do you prefer quiet settings or busy, energetic ones? Are you a night owl or a morning person? Do you prefer to work solo or as part of a team?
- Visit the periodicals rack at your local library. Pull out the magazines or journals that most appeal to you, and read between the lines. Log onto the Internet, plug key words into a search engine, and see where your online safari takes you.
- Remind yourself of past dreams for your life. You may have given them up for lost, but they still can point you toward your authentic self.
- Take a few minutes for silent meditation or prayer. Ask a higher power even if that means just your subconscious mind - to show you the way.



5 Unearth your true passion in life steps



Commit to your dreams. Once you are confident of your goal, take care to share your vision initially only with those likely to understand and encourage it. Some people may feel threatened by or jealous of your inspirations for change.

Start moving toward your goal, 1 step at a time that's how most dreams are achieved. Make a practical, down-to-earth plan of action, take it slowly and consistently, don't expect instant results. Be flexible as your life situation changes, your goals also may need adjusting.

Suggestion: Look at everything you do in life, no matter how mundane or challenging, as a stepping stone toward your goal.



Be in it for the journey, not the destination. Celebrate success in reaching short-range goals. Attaining these is what permits you to reach more challenging, long-range goals.



Make space for your vision. Learn to say no to any unwanted extras that don't fit in with your new goals. In time, you may find the space you've opened up already has become filled with the stuff of dreams.

Charting a New Flight Plan

You can find these helpful resources in your local or online bookstore.

The Purpose of Your Life: Finding Your Place in the World Using Synchronicity, Intuition and Uncommon Sense, Carol Adrienne and James Redfield, William Morrow & Co., 1998, \$22, ISBN: 068815512X

Live the Life You Love: In 10 Easy Step-by-Step Lessons, Barbara Sher DTP, 1997, \$9.95, ISBN: 0440507561

Celebrating Success: Inspiring Personal Letters on the Meaning of Success, Gerard Smith, Health Communications, 1997, \$12.95, ISBN: 155874455X

Manifesting Your Heart's Desire, Fred Fengler, Heart Light, 1994, \$13.95, ISBN: 0964130505

The Acorn Principle: Nurture Your Nature - Find Out How Rich, Full, and Rewarding Your Life Can Be, Jim Cathcart, St. Martin's Press, 1999, \$12.95, ISBN: 0312242840

Think you know what you want? Think again.

Try a simple exercise to reassess your wants and needs:

- Look at the persistent thoughts you have that reflect your ambitions or desires. For example, "If only I was married (or single), I would be happy" - or "If only I had a better job," "if only I'd win the lottery," "if only I lived nearer to (farther from) my parents."
- Look even closer: *Why* do you want that? For example, "I want to win the lottery because then I could live in a bigger house."
- Keep asking "why" until you discover your root motivation. "Why do I want to live in a bigger house? Because then I would have more respect from my neighbors and relatives. Why do I want more respect from them? Then I'd feel more self-respect. With more self-respect, I'd feel more at peace. If I felt peaceful, then I could accept myself for who I am."

Try this with any of your goals. Once you reach the final answer to "why," you may see other, more immediate ways to accomplish your ultimate objective. To achieve self-acceptance, for example, it's not really necessary to win the lottery. Think about what truly could give you peace of mind

